Gains and losses by WTO Agreements

1506. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that after singing the WTO Agreements, India has suffered a heavy loss as the country's SSI units are being closed, employment has shrunk and India has no access to the international market as far agriculture products are concerned;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering a review and provide balance sheet on gains and losses; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Despite the challenges posed by Liberalisation and Globalisation and signing of WTO Agreements, the SSI Sector in India has shown its resilience to withstand the onslaught of global competition. The performance of SSI Sector, in terms of various indicators in the past five years has improved substantially as under:

INDICATORS	1997-98	2002-03
No. of Units (in lakhs)	29.44	35.72
Producrtion (in Rs. Crores at current prices)	4,62,641	7,60,844
Employment (Lakh Nos.)	167.72	199.65

The exports from the SSI Sector have increased from Rs. 44,442 crore in 1997-98 to Rs. 71,244 crore in 2001-02. Also the number of sick SSI units has decreased from 2,21,536 at the end of March, 1998 to 1,77,336 at the end of March, 2002, as per the latest data compiled by the Reserve bank of India from the Scheduled Commercial Banks.

India's agricultural exports have increased substantially since entry into force of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on 1.1.1995. However, on account of certain asymmetries in the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, which could not fully regulate tariffication and permitted only some reduction in trade-

distorting domestic support and export subsidies by developed countries, the market access opportunities for developing countries in the international market have remained modest. Some developed countries have also been applying non-tariff barriers to restrict imports of agricultural products.

On the whole, under the existing provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture India's domestic policy for the agriculture sector has by and large not been constrained by the commitments undertaken under any of the three pillars, market access, domestic support and export competition. India's exports receive Most Favoured Nation and national treatment in WTO Meber Countires. The WTO also has a time-bound dispute settlement machanism to resolve any disputes between Members.

The on-going negotiations in agriculture are being carried out on the basis of Member countries' experience in the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture. India's negotiating proposals are submitted after detailed consultations with all stakeholders.

In the on-going negotiations on the Agreement on Agriculture, India, along with like-minded WTO Members, therefore, seeks to correct the asymmetries in the Agreement on Agriculture through substantial reduction in all forms of trade-distorting domestic support by developed countries and the elimination of export subsidies, except export subsidies provided by all developing countries to reduce their high costs of marketing, including handling, upgrading and other processing costs, and costs of transport and freight permitted under the existing provisions which would remain without reduction commitment. India has also proposed that food and livelihood security concerns of developing countries should be safeguarded, and substantial improvements in market access in products of export interest to developing countries should be agreed.

Contribution in World Trade

1507. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is India's contribution in World Trade and joining WTO regime; and